

Minutes - King County Rural Forest Commission Meeting
Thursday, July 10, 2014, Preston Community Center

Commissioners present: Nate Veranth, forest landowner (Chair), Bernie McKinney, forest landowner; Dick Ryon, North Bend resident; Rex Thompson, forester; Daryl Harper, forest landowner; Cindy Spiry, Snoqualmie Tribe

Staff: Lisa LaBrache, Alan Painter; Kristi McClelland, Forester, Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD); and Linda Vane, Commission Liaison

Guests: Fran Troje, Middle Green River Coalition; Sheryl Wiser, Cascade Harvest Coalition; and Eric Richardson, Hancock Forest Management Group

Chair Nate Veranth called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Minutes: Motion 1- 0714 That the minutes of the May 8, 2014 meeting be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Staff and Agency Reports and Announcement

Commission Administration – Linda Vane, Commission Liaison, reminded the commissioners to complete the online trainings related to the Washington Open Public Meetings Act and Public Records Retention Act if they had not already done so.

King Conservation District (KCD) – Dick Ryon, a member of the KCD Board of Supervisors, provided an update on the KCD's draft 2015 Work Plan and budget. He said that the KCD proposed expanding services to underserved rural and urban populations. This would include more money for grants and adding forestry to the KCD's technical assistance program, he said.

Dick encouraged everyone to review the proposed work plan on the KCD website (www.kingcd.org) or to attend one of the upcoming public meetings. Comments by the public would be considered by the KCD in preparing their final proposed 2015 Work Plan.

Snoqualmie Tribe – Cindy Spiry announced that the Snoqualmie Tribe would hold their 2015 Green Summit conference in Seattle. Their program will include a Forest topics track.

Ownership patterns in the forested landscape of King County

Linda Vane, Commission Liaison

Linda reported on an analysis of the changes in ownership since 2007 of forested properties in King County's Forest Production District and Rural Forest Focus Areas. Large maps were used to show the changes in ownership among large industrial forest properties. It was this category where the most significant changes occurred, she said. Over 75,000 acres moved from private to State, Federal, and Tribal ownership between 2007 and 2014 in King County, according to Linda.

Promoting local wood products with Puget Sound Grown

Sheryl Wiser, Communications Manager, Cascade Harvest Coalition

Sheryl reported on the Cascade Harvest Coalition's (CHC) new marketing program for local forest products. The program was originally limited to Puget Sound and now is statewide. Their latest innovation is a new smartphone app that allows consumers to find and map producers quickly and conveniently, said Sheryl.

Sheryl said that consumers can find businesses that stock locally sourced, sustainably produced specialty forest goods using the app and on the CHC website (www.cascadeharvest.org). Product categories include:

- Sawmills, lumber, and wood products
- Botanicals and medicinal products
- Native plant nurseries
- Foraged goods, non-timber forest products

The CHC website also provides information on:

- Information resources for forest landowners
- Foraging and crafting classes
- Herbal medicine classes
- Green building resources

Sheryl asked the Commission for suggestions on ways to link farms and forests and if there was food that comes from forest that should be added to the website. A discussion ensued. Sheryl acknowledged King County for providing partial funding for the project.

Communicating to the public about forests and forestry

Linda Vane, Commission Liaison

Linda facilitated a discussion of new ideas for engaging more King County residents in forest-related activities and interests. The commissioners first created a list of the needs and opportunities. This was followed by a discussion of potential roles for King County.

What are the needs and opportunities?

- Landscape management – There are many forest lands both public and private that are not maintained adequately.
- Connect growers of floral greens to sellers.
- People need to experience the forest. Provide more opportunities for conservation projects and work in the woods, particularly for young people.

- Provide more education on and access to traditional plant uses – medicine, food, materials.
- Population growth in King County will greatly increase demand for forests in which to recreate. Particularly parks and open spaces within a one-hour drive of Seattle will be in demand.
- More information on history and locations of traditional trails is needed.
- Scholarships/internships in forestry, botany, etc. Explore public/private partnerships with Green River Community College, South Seattle Community College, school districts, etc. could provide opportunities for young people to experience natural resource work.
- Give kids opportunities in the forest, such as students giving educational credits at community college or through school districts.
- Take tools to the people. Make it easier for stewardship to begin from the grassroots perspective with more accessible informational tools.
- Make avenues available for the management of common areas by citizens.
- Educate those who use forests about sacred sites or how to gather traditional foods in a sustainable way.
- Current Use Taxation – Does it offer enough of an incentive? If so, communicate that.

What can the County address these needs?

- More public outreach and education are needed in the County's approach to enforcing regulations.
- Regarding active management of county lands: let people see what King County is doing and how that work benefits the environment.
- Involve more non-profit organizations in projects on County-owned lands. Look for public/private partnerships and make use of opportunities for the County to participate in or support events like Rock the Green.
- Explore new ways to offer the community a chance to work in public forests as volunteers, students earning credit, or interns.
- Partner with communities to make more people aware of the technical assistance that the KCD and King County offer.
- More communication with citizens about the benefits of participating in a Current Use Taxation program is needed. Make it easier to understand the process, to enroll, and to comply with the rules.
- If the County is actively managing its resource lands, then showcase it. Show the public what is being done and why; make sure people know what goals are being achieved by a thinning or clearcut.

- Consider supporting scholarships for students to participate in forestry or farming experiences, perhaps through school districts for credit.
- Look into the question of whether the permit review process for development includes adequate protection of sites that are sacred or are of historical importance to Tribes.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on September 11, 2014, at the Preston Community Center.

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